



Request for City Council Committee Action

Date: September 25, 2003

To: Zoning and Planning Committee

Subject:

Findings on the Need for a Mandatory or Discretionary Environmental Assessment Worksheet for the American Trio Building Project, 616 S. 3rd St.

Recommendation

The Minneapolis Planning Department recommends the City Council adopt the above findings and concludes that no Mandatory Environmental Assessment Worksheet is required under Minnesota Rules at 4410.4300 Subp. 31.

The Minneapolis Planning Department further recommends the City Council concludes that no Discretionary Environmental Assessment Worksheet under Minnesota Rules at 4410.4500 is warranted.

Prepared or Submitted by: Michael Orange, Principal Planner, Planning Department

Approved by:

Chuck Ballentine, Planning Director
Presenters in Committee: Michael Orange

Financial Impact (Check those that apply)

- ☒ No financial impact (If checked, go directly to Background/Supporting Information)
- ☐ Action requires an appropriation increase to the Capital Budget
- ☐ Action requires an appropriation increase to the Operating Budget
- ☐ Action provides increased revenue for appropriation increase
- ☐ Action requires use of contingency or reserves
- ☐ Other financial impact (Explain): Action is within grant budget
- ☐ Request provided to the Budget Office when provided to the Committee Coordinator

Background/Supporting Information

Refer to attached Findings report

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Assessment Worksheet for the American Trio Building Project, 616 S. 3rd St.**

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A. The American Trio Building Project

The existing brick commercial building was built in 1910 and designated by the Minneapolis City Council as an historic building in 1977. It has 7-stories, is 100 feet high, and contains 126,500 sq. ft. It has a footprint of 17,655 square feet and sits on a lot area that is 27,700 square feet. The Northern Implement Company originally used the building and later the Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company. It is individually listed on both the national and local registers of historic resources (Attachments 1 & 2).

The project will convert the building into 66 condominium units on the second through the seventh floors. The first floor will include an 8,400 sq. ft. bar/restaurant and other uses associated with the residences (management office, party/conference room, elevators, and restrooms). The project includes 59 full-sized stalls including 2 handicap stalls, and 3 compact stalls for a total of 62 stalls, all of which are reserved for the residents (Attachment 3).

The applicant, Mr. Ned Abdul, intends to remove the side loading dock to accommodate the parking required by City codes for the residences (Attachment 5). The staff of the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) reviewed the project and concluded that the side loading dock is a “non-contributing” element of the building (Attachment 6) stating the following: “The side loading platform was built in 1942 and in 1951 was covered with corrugated metal (extant). In 1962, a larger area was enclosed with concrete blocks.” On 9/16/03, the HPC voted to approve the project subject to certain conditions (Attachment 7). Planning staff consulted with a staffperson of the Minnesota Historical Society (MHS) who said that they had no concern if the loading dock were removed provided the rest of the building was treated properly and the damage caused by the removal was repaired. Although Planning staff requested a written response more than a month ago, no letter has been received to date.

The project will be scheduled for public hearing before the Minneapolis Planning Commission after the City makes a determination regarding the need for an Environmental Assessment Worksheet.

B. State Environmental Review

Minnesota Rules at 4410.4300 Subp. 31 prescribe a Mandatory EAW for projects involving the “destruction, in whole or part, or the moving of a property that is listed on

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the National Register of Historic Places or State Register of Historic Places.”¹ The law states that the “permitting state agency or local unit of government shall be the [Responsible Government Unit (RGU)], except this does not apply to projects reviewed under section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.” The State Register is the same as the National Register.

The City of Minneapolis is the RGU in this case. The City Council and Mayor have designated the Planning Department as the department responsible for advising the City as regards the City’s environmental review responsibilities.

C. Findings

The Minneapolis Planning Director makes the following findings as regards the project:

1. The Project is not exempt under Minn. Rules 4410.4300 Subp. 31 and 4410. 4600 Subp. 2E.
2. Planning staff have consulted the documentation for the American Trio Building, and consulted with the staff of the Minnesota Historical Society, the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC), and the staff of the Environmental Quality Board, which is the state agency responsible for implementing Minnesota’s environmental review program.
3. The staff of the HPC concluded that the portion of the American Trio Building to be removed, namely, the side loading dock, is a “non-contributing” part of the historic building.
4. On 9/16/03, the HPC approved the removal of the side loading dock and the rest of the project subject to certain conditions.
5. In 2000, the City considered the project located at 801 Washington Ave. N. and within the Minneapolis Warehouse Historic District. The project involved the demolition of two small corrugated steel buildings that had been added to the historic main building many years outside of the period of significance for the main building. Based upon the findings by City staff that the two structures were not contributing elements of the historic building, the City Council decided, within its authority as the RGU for the project, that no Mandatory EAW was

¹ Subp. 31. **Historical places.** For the destruction, in whole or part, or the moving of a property that is listed on the National Register of Historic Places or State Register of Historic Places, the permitting state agency or local unit of government shall be the RGU, except this does not apply to projects reviewed under section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, United States Code, title 16, section 470, or the federal policy on lands, wildlife and waterfowl refuges, and historic sites pursuant to United States Code, title 49, section 303.

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required and that no Discretionary EAW was warranted (approved 3/30/00).

6. In 2000, the City considered the Lupient site project, now known as the Village at St. Anthony Apartments, located in the vicinity of Main St. NE, First Ave. NE, and University Ave. NE (currently under construction). The site is within the St. Anthony Falls Historic District. The project involved the demolition of four buildings and the rehabilitation of two other buildings. Based upon the findings by City staff that these six buildings were not contributing buildings to the historic district, the City Council decided, within its authority as the RGU for the project, that no Mandatory EAW was required and that no Discretionary EAW was warranted (approved 3/30/00).
7. The Planning Department concludes that the portion of the American Trio Building to be removed, namely, the side loading dock, is a “non-contributing” part of the historic building, and that its removal will have no significant impact on the designated building provided the applicant complies with the conditions of approval from the Minneapolis HPC.
8. The Planning Department concludes that no Mandatory Environmental Assessment Worksheet is required under Minnesota Rules at 4410.45300 Subp. 31, nor a Discretionary Environmental Assessment Worksheet under Minnesota Rules at 4410.4500.

D. Recommendation

The Minneapolis Planning Department recommends the City Council adopt the above findings and concludes that no Mandatory Environmental Assessment Worksheet is required under Minnesota Rules at 4410.4300 Subp. 31.

The Minneapolis Planning Department further recommends the City Council concludes that no Discretionary Environmental Assessment Worksheet under Minnesota Rules at 4410.4500 is warranted.

Chuck Ballentine, Planning Director (date)

Attachments:

1. Area map
2. Site plan
3. Perspective images
4. Current building photos
5. Photos of side loading dock
6. Letter from Amy Lucas, 7/16/03
7. Letter from Amy Lucas, 7/17/03